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AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

Is the Horatian maxim concerning a written work—*Nonumque prematur in annum*—were strictly acted up to by everybody concerned, how severe a blow would be dealt to the publishing interests of the country! Of course old gentlemen love to quote this counsel of the Latin poet purely on account of its soundness and wisdom, and not at all because it involves a nice, cheerful, snubbing sort of treatment of the young author!

But fancy men really suppressing their literary creations for nearly a decennary! Think of the changes that years bring about—even nine years. Contemplate your own portrait taken some while back—the dashing water-colour drawing by your old friend Verditer—he declared that he had caught you in a very happy moment, and he has depicted you a romantic-looking creature, with flowing hair, in a flowery dressing-gown; your fine eyes gazing well up and out of the picture. Is that like you now? Are you not, in truth, a little ashamed of your old poetic, Book-of-Beauty expression? Study also, if you can, your letters written nine years back, and your diary of that date, if you kept an ample and an honest one, and you will find your mind has changed just as much as your body. Are we any of us the same persons we were a short time back? Is that individual who calls himself my friend Robinson—a man of feeble frame, short stature, and not robust mind—is he the same as the boy Robinson, my school-fellow, a creature of gigantic form and enormous strength, who used to bully me fearfully some while ago? He himself declares that he is so. I confess I scarcely believe it. I cannot find in this frail man a single feature or trace of the monster boy. And for myself, I cannot conceive that a person of my inches, both as to height and girth, and of my burden—I know I nearly exhaust the ordinary stock of weights when I get into the scales—can be the same being who was maltreated as a boy by Robinson. I should like to see the person calling himself Robinson attempt it now.

Some men—Clive, for instance—surveying their past actions, have marvelled at their own moderation. When I contemplate certain behaviour of mine, I am amazed at my own extravagance. A few skirmishers, we are told, during the Crimean war, had at one time advanced so far into Sebastopol, that, had they been supported, they might have captured that stronghold long before the date of its actual fall. So, by an almost unconscious audacity on my part, when a very young man, I do believe that I was nearer the possession of a young, and rich, and beautiful wife, than I have ever

been since, or am ever likely to be again. I certainly was a very young man when I knocked at the door of old Mr Wigley's house in Harley Street, with the object of formally applying for the hand of Miss Fanny Wigley; and I am very much astonished now when I consider that old audacity.

He was an early man, I had ascertained. He took his breakfast at half-past eight every morning in the back parlour, which he chose to call his study, chiefly, so far as I could discover his reason, because he there kept his stock of boots. These were all of the Wellington pattern, and were ranged in front of the fireplace semicircularly, very much as Caspar disposes the skulls in the incantation scene in *Der Freischütz*. I remember that similitude occurring to me on the morning of my visit—the opera being then in the heyday of its popularity. Mrs Wigley and the young ladies breakfasted at a much later hour in the front parlour. But as my object then was to see Mr Wigley, and have with him a certain private discussion, of course it was advisable for me to call upon him at his house in Harley Street before he started upon his daily pilgrimage into the city. Having made up my mind to this course on the previous evening, need I say that I was kept awake by the thoughts of it nearly all night, and arose at an absurdly early hour to carry my plan into execution.

Concerning myself, I must disclose that I was at that time an article clerk in the house of Messrs Blotherstone and Blackland, the eminent solicitors in New Square, Lincoln's Inn Fields—that I had occupied a stool in their office for about two years—that I was entirely dependent for my support on the remittances I received from my relatives in Cheshire—and that I occupied second-floor lodgings in the house of a boot-maker in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury—pleasant apartments enough, but for the all-pervading smell of leather that distinguished them. I know that one seemed to eat, drink, and breathe leather there, and the fits of sneezing with which visitors were seized on their entrance, were really remarkable. I was a young man, as I have said. I shaved a good deal; it was not at all necessary, but I did it: I had lively hopes concerning a sickly-looking tuft on my chin. I was prone to pomatum, and partial to side-curls, brought round with elaborate care well over my ears and on to my temples. I was fond of musk and bergamot, and trousers very tightly strapped under my boots—tightly strapped trousers were then quite *de rigueur*. I humoured fashion to the top of her bent; my straps were so tight that walking was difficult, and sitting down perilous, if not impossible. Fortunately, we were then in the old broadcloth and buckskin days; we had not fallen into the present

epoch of flimsy tweed and general shoddiness. People dare not trust themselves with tight straps now. The bobtail, skimping, and indecorous coats in which modern young gentlemen appear, were not worn then. You put on the first thing in the morning that would now be regarded as an evening coat—a grand, sound, expensive, uncomfortable garment, high and hard in the collar, tight and long in the sleeves, with several buttons about the wrists, cuffs (that could be turned over if you so listed, and thereby exhibit a lining of velvet), long and streaming swallow-tails, reaching to the calves, and with the mysterious horizontal semicolon of buttons high up in the small of the back. Such was a coat in the times of which I am narrating. Tailors do well to designate modern attire evasively as Wrappers, Talmas, Paletots, &c., for indeed such things are not coats by the side of the coat in which I went to call on old Wigley. There were other shaped coats even then. You could wear, if you pleased, a superb *pelisse*, with rich silk lining; or a magnificent *surcoat*, in which you were at liberty to go any lengths in the way of fur collar and cuffs, or thick silk braiding up the front, as worn by the gracious monarch then sitting, rather heavily, upon the throne of Great Britain.

Mr Blotherstone was an old friend of my father's. Almost as a matter of favour, and in consideration of that friendship, I was received into the office of the firm in Lincoln's Inn Fields, at the ridiculously low premium of three hundred guineas. For this amount, I was at full liberty to work as an unremunerated copying-clerk for five years. I remember that Mr Blotherstone had promised my mother most faithfully to watch my progress and look after me in London, as though I were his own child. He fulfilled this undertaking by shaking hands with me once, asking me to one dinner-party, and to two evening-parties at his house, and by losing sight of me altogether afterwards. But the fact was, there were four articulated pupils in the office, and I don't think he ever knew precisely which was which. It was at the evening-parties that I first had the pleasure, the happiness, the intense and inexpressible delight of meeting Fanny Wigley. My presence at Mr Blotherstone's seemed to be a sort of passport to other evening-parties, at which I also met Fanny Wigley, and danced quadrilles with her. I wore pumps and ribbed silk stockings, after the fashion of the period. No gentleman would then have dared to enter a drawing-room with his boots on. I danced quadrilles with Fanny Wigley, and the dear delicious old triple-timed waltz. How the swallow-tails used to fly out in that beautiful dance! I had met her six times, when I determined to ask her hand in marriage; of course, I had been passionately in love with her from the first moment of my seeing her.

She was a beautiful creature, with delicate features, and gazelle-like eyes. Her flaxen hair was twined round her high carved tortoise-shell comb, and interwoven with blue ribbon and sprigs of forget-me-nots. She was small in stature, and perhaps, at that time, a little too thin for abstract beauty, though it seemed to me that her ethereal and sylph-like figure was absolutely perfect. I could not forget how slender she once was, when I saw her, the other day, panting and rather overcome with the heat and with her walk, a very stout lady, standing with her tall daughters near the house of the elephant in the Zoological Gardens, and inspecting the grave deportment of that noble animal! But I am anticipating. It seemed to me the height of earthly bliss to waltz with Fanny Wigley, and minister to her wants at supper-time. These were simple and beautiful. She ate only of blanc-mange and macaroons, though she did not object to her plate being filled and refilled with those luxurious condiments. I deemed them quite an appropriate food for her, and that they supplied

all the nourishment that birds and angels could possibly require.

I made no secret of my passion: youth is ever confiding. I blushed, and stammered, and tore my glove; still, I avowed my love. She turned up the lovely gazelle eyes, and said: 'Thank you,' and then asked gently for a little sherry and water. I pressed my suit upon her. She said I had better speak to her papa, and added, that she should like 'just one more macaroon.' Could a lover's prayer be acceded to in a more touching and exquisite manner? I spoke boldly of my love everywhere; I was fond, perhaps, of giving my affection an airing. I was proud of possessing a passion; it seemed a grand and manly sort of thing—very nearly as good as whiskers. I talked of it at the office, rather looking down on the other articulated pupils, in whose limited experiences there were no affairs of the heart. I took counsel on the subject even with old Higgins, the common-law clerk, who had a general reputation for knowing everything. He was not, strictly speaking, a very gentlemanly person, but he was very wise and wary. 'Take my advice,' he said solemnly, after a huge pinch of snuff: 'make love as much as you like, but don't you trust yourself near a pen and ink. Don't write no letters—none of that; then, you see, you can't hardly commit yourself, and they can't get hold of you with a breach of promise, or anything of that kind. Do you see all these papers? Well, they're all the letters in a breach-of-promise case. We're for the plaintiff, and shall make a good thing of it. By the by, there's a copy wanted, on brief paper, for counsel. You may as well make it; you don't seem to be doing much.' I thought at the time that he took rather low views of human nature, but then, you see, he was a common-law clerk.

I took for granted that every one I encountered on that eventful morning knew all about me and my mission. It seemed to me that my character was stamped all over me in large letters, just as a bad note is marked with the word 'Forgery' at the Bank of England. 'Lover' was written on my glossy hat, on my shining curls, on my tightly strapped trousers, on my velvet-lined coat-cuffs. The early milk-women were conscious of my proceedings, and the postmen, and the bakers with hot rolls in green baize, and the sweepers, and the beggars who proffered me lavender, pressing it upon me as though it were a necessary of life, and bergamot and musk were by no means perfume enough for one man. All knew that I was journeying to Harley Street to ask of her parent the hand of Fanny Wigley—even to the cook, who was cleaning the door-steps of Mr Wigley's house—a massive woman, with whom it was difficult to arrive at an understanding as to whether she purposed that I should pass on the right or the left of her, until it was almost necessary, at last, to gain an entry to the house by clearing her as in a hurdle-race. She knew why I came to Harley Street, as did also the tall footman, who appeared to be full-dress as to his legs, encased in white stockings and sulphur-coloured plush, and in dishabille as to body and arms—for he wore a soiled gray jean jacket—and who ushered me rather unceremoniously, I thought, into the back parlour, where Mr Wigley was sitting at breakfast. The street-door being open, there had been no occasion for my using the knocker. Does he conceive that I came with a ring? I asked myself; for Mr Wigley did not appear to heed my entrance, and the footman had not announced, nor, indeed, asked of me my name. Mr Wigley was bent upon tapping his second egg, breaking the shell very neatly all over the top of it. I was disappointed at my reception, I confess. I had flattered myself, and my glass had flattered me, that my appearance was irreproachable, if not positively commanding. I knew that I was red in the face—very red, I may say—and that my cravat felt at that moment a little

too tight for me, somehow; but, with those exceptions, I was conscious of nothing disintitling me to a gracious welcome at the hands of Wigley.

I made use of the opportunity afforded me for contemplating my presumptive father-in-law. I detected at once a singular likeness between the shape of his shining bald head and the egg he was so busily tapping. A picture, for a moment, appeared before me of a giant form, with a monster spoon, standing over old Wigley, tapping his cranium into a number of neat compound fractures, just as he was tapping the egg. He was portly, but pale, with a sandy fringe of hair at the back of his head, and two sandy tufts of whiskers, triangular in plan, on his cheek-bones. He had sandy projecting eyebrows over his pale, blank-looking blue eyes, and a white frill, fastened by a sandy-coloured Scotch pebble brooch, guttering out over his large protruding sandy waistcoat. I could not find a trace of resemblance to my angelic Fanny. Still he was *her* father, and to be venerated by me accordingly, and loved and tended affectionately. I may as well say that I think, upon the whole, Mr Wigley was rather a dull man. He was the head of the eminent firm of Wigley, Bigley, & Co., bullion brokers, Ingot Court, Great Winchester Street, City. I did not know then, and I do not know now, anything about bullion brokers and their proceedings. I associate the occupation with the idea of immense wealth, though I cannot imagine any talent possessed by old Wigley in any way resulting in money. But then there are certain businesses that are popularly supposed to work themselves, merely requiring the presence of an elderly gentleman to sit in a snug office and read the newspaper the while. Perhaps the business of a bullion broker is of this kind: for such an occupation, Mr Wigley was clearly formed by nature.

I had met Mr Wigley on two or three occasions: he was generally to be seen at the evening-parties adorned by the presence of Miss Wigley, either losing half-crowns at the whist-table, or in a torpid state in the corners of rooms waiting for supper or his carriage to take him home. I think we had once shaken hands feebly and flabbily, from not knowing exactly what else to do with ourselves, on the occasion of an introduction to each other by Mr Blotherstone. But he evidently had forgotten all about me now. I took a chair. He started at this, and looked hard at me. I bowed with a winning politeness.

'I've come, Mr Wigley'—I said.

'Oh! ah! yes; but, perhaps, you'd better see Mrs Wigley,' he interrupted, nervously tattooing on the table with his fat white fingers. 'Mrs Wigley always attends to these sort of things. I never interfere—never.'

'But I thought it desirable'—

'Yes, of course, but it isn't,' he said.—'You don't seem to me to look very strong,' he continued abruptly, staring at me.

I thanked him, informing him that, on the contrary, I was very strong indeed, much stronger than I looked perhaps, and availed myself of the occasion to make inquiries concerning his own health. These, however, he quite disregarded. He fixed his eyes steadily on the bright silver tea-pot.

'How long have you been in your present situation?' he asked, rather of the tea-pot than of me.

'Two years,' I answered. 'I have three more to serve.'

'Oh, three more to serve!' he repeated wildly, evidently not in the least understanding me.

'I shall then have done with Mr Blotherstone,' I continued.

'Oh, you come from Mr Blotherstone?' he cried, with an amazed expression on his face.

'Yes,' I said. 'I'm his articulated pupil, and I've come here, Mr Wigley—and I'm sure I spoke with much feeling—to ask your consent to my union with your daughter Fanny. Mr Wigley, I love her.'

'My daughter Fanny!' and he started up. 'Bless my soul! To think of this!' and he fell to rubbing his bald head to a brilliant polish with his handkerchief. 'Mr Blotherstone's articulated pupil! My daughter Fanny! Marriage! Dear me! Have you any means?' he asked.

'None whatever,' I replied. 'But I love her, Mr Wigley, to that extent'—

There came the flutter and rustle of a muslin morning-gown, and a lady of large mould entered the room. She was a brilliant-looking woman even then, though she was Fanny's mother, with a tendency to dark red in her brunette complexion.

'O Charlotte,' cried Mr Wigley to this superb lady, and an air of intense relief came to him at a moment when, in his embarrassment, I felt sure he was about to say: 'Take her, then, you dog. Bless you, Fanny, my darling; bless you both: may you be happy.'

'Won't do at all,' Mrs Wigley said firmly, after a glance at me—'won't do at all: will never match Joseph.'

'My dear,' cried old Wigley in an agony, 'it's not the new f—' (my impression is that he said *footman*, but, as he lowered his voice, I cannot be quite sure). 'It's Mr Blotherstone's articulated pupil come to propose for Fanny!'

Mrs Wigley looked at me inquiringly. I felt my cheeks burning, and wondered they did not set fire to my shirt-collars, they were so hot. She gave a hearty laugh.

'Stuff and nonsense!' she said. 'Pooh, pooh! What a foolish boy you must be. I remember you now. We met you at Mr Blotherstone's and somewhere else. Fanny goes back to school next Monday. You mustn't think of such things. Have you breakfasted? Let me give you a cup of tea. There's cold fowl there. Or will you have some broiled ham?'

She blew away my offer of marriage with one breath.

I don't know how I got away from Harley Street; I only know that, on leaving, the footman in the sulphur plush whispered, grinning: 'You must be a jolly flat to think you could come after me!'

To this day, I have had a difficulty in understanding that singular observation.

I have hinted that I have seen Fanny Wigley since. Perhaps I kept my offer for nine years, or longer, and then did not publish it. Don't imagine that my passion was too suddenly suppressed. A single frosty night will sometimes destroy a whole season's fruit; and, if you take it in time, a fire that else would burn down your whole house, may be put out with a pail of water. Mrs Wigley was my frosty night, my pail of water.

WEAPONS OF WAR.

ARMS offensive are naturally divided into two distinct classes: the first, and largest, includes missiles and instruments of projection, adapted for slaying at a distance; the second class embraces the weapons for close fighting. It is with reference to missiles that invention has been most active, and to their perfection have been directed those recent improvements which threaten to revolutionise the art of war, and to necessitate entirely novel tactics. The very name of artillery, which we now attach exclusively to cannon, is derived, according to some of the greatest of French grammarians, from *arcus*, a bow; in our English translation of the Old Testament, the same derivation occurs; and when Jonathan the son of Saul gave his bow and arrows into the keeping of his page, the word 'artillery' is expressly used. Artillery, then, on the authority of Vossius and others, implied merely an engine for shooting arrows and other projectiles, and the earliest and most general engine of the kind is unquestionably the bow. The bow is the oldest of historical

weapons of this class; in one form or another, it has pervaded the world; and even in America, where so little similarity to the customs of the old continent existed, the Spanish discoverers found this universal weapon in the hands of the rudest tribes.

One remarkable exception, and only one, occurs to this general use of the bow; the natives of the Austral continent, and those of the various Polynesian archipelagoes, have no knowledge of the bow in any shape: their only missile weapons are the spear—thrown not only by hand, but by a perforated throwing-stick—and that very curious device, the boomerang. The latter, which we only see in Europe in the form of a toy for children, consists of a curved piece of flat wood, bent nearly at right angles, and with sharp edges, and possesses the singular property of returning to very nearly the spot from whence it has been cast; indeed, it has been asserted that some Australian blacks can fling the boomerang so as to bring back with it the stricken bird to the hand of the hunter, and although this may be fabulous, at any rate an instrument so ingenious as to puzzle philosophers has been invented by those most degraded of all aborigines. The Maories of New Zealand, a much higher race, whose shrewdness and robust valour have hitherto preserved them from the usual doom of savages, were equally ignorant of the bow, nor had they boomerangs; but it is a curious testimony to the value of the former weapons, that when, fifty-eight years ago, some intelligent New Zealand chiefs were brought to England to receive instruction, and to do homage to their Great Father, King George, they were as much delighted with the old English bows, shewn to them in the Tower armoury, as with the musket itself, and were disposed to value the one as highly as the other, both being equally new to them. The earliest bows on record were those used by the Hebrews and their enemies, and during the heroic period of Greece. But these bows were slight and weak; they were only drawn to the *breast*, and not, in the fashion of our own English yeomen, to the *ear*, and the shafts were feebly propelled, and ill aimed; while *toxotes*, or archer, was an absolute word of insult and scorn, in such contempt were the light-armed marksmen held by the heavy-armed warriors who fought in chariots.

Among the Jews, the arrow seems to have been more formidable in battle, but still the sword and spear were the main reliance of an army; and it was not until after the multitudes of Xerxes were poured upon Europe, that we find missiles rise to high consideration. The strength of the Great King's army seems to have mainly consisted of archers. There were the Persian and Parthian horsemen, who used short, but strong bows, and whose chief manoeuvre was to wheel abruptly, and discharge clouds of arrows as they fled before the foe; there were the tall Ethiopians, with six-foot bows, and short shafts tipped with porphyry; the Bactrians, Arabians, Scythians, and a hundred other races, with those twanging bows and barbed reeds which their descendants used against the Crusaders. But the easy and signal discomfiture of this great armament probably confirmed the Grecian victors in their scorn of missiles, as the resource of timid Asia, unfit to sustain the shock of their heavy-armed hoplites; and though the flanks of the Roman legion were always protected by archers and slingers, these light troops were little esteemed until after the troops of Crassus had been overwhelmed by the Parthian arrows. The bow, the favourite weapon of Orientals, continued to be used on horseback, and was therefore short, and the arrows were always very light, of the *arundo*, or reed. The string was but drawn to the breast; the range was short, therefore, and the accuracy of no aim could be relied on, though, on foot, certain talented marksmen shewed a skill worthy of better arms. Domitian, who was able to plant successive shafts between the

extended fingers of a slave; and Commodus, who, with crescent-headed arrows, decapitated successive ostriches in the Roman circus, were notable instances of this. But it was not until the Scythian tribes, known as Huns and Turks, began to press with the weight of restless numbers on the empire, that Rome thoroughly adopted the bow. The Scythian bow differed much from the Bactrian, or ordinary horseman's bow, of Asia: it was long, and of powerful make, being of wood or horn; the reed-arrows, iron-tipped and barbed, were of unusual length, and carefully weighted; and the string was drawn to the ear, not to the breast, thus lengthening the range, and adding precision to the aim.

It was the Emperor Gratian who first publicly assumed the barbaric dress, the rattling quiver, and the ringing bow of a Scythian warrior; but for centuries during the decline of the Eastern Empire, the Roman soldiers fought on horseback and in armour, using this formidable bow which they had borrowed from the Tartars. In the early middle ages, the archer had degenerated, and the bow was of little account until the Norman Conquest. William of Normandy, a scholar and a general of originality, revived the long Scythian bow, and the Scythian mode of drawing the arrow to the ear, and the Norman arrows went far to win Hastings, besides giving a cruel death-wound to Harold the Unfortunate. The art of archery, thus renewed, was readily adopted by the Anglo-Saxons. Then came the days of Sherwood Forest and its company of jovial outlaws; and the fame of Robin Hood, of Clyn of the Cleugh, and William of Cloudeley, exalts them over all living and dead brethren of the bow; albeit little deemed stout Robin, when striking the king's deer, and not sparing the sheriff of Nottingham, that it was to the Scythians that he owed the art of drawing the silken string to his ear in launching his unerring shafts. Indeed, no other nation but the English retained the practice of thus handling the bow; the French, Italians, Flemings, drew only to the breast, and their arrows were weakly and vaguely aimed; while Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt were mainly won by the

Fatal hail-shower,
The storm of England's wrath.

Nor could even the hardy Scots, natives of the same island, ever learn the use of the English bow, or the art of drawing the string to the ear. Archery seemed a science peculiar to South Britain. A few of the wondrous cloth-yard arrows are still in existence; they are of the above extraordinary length, but very slender compared to those of modern make, being no thicker than a tobacco-pipe, with long steel heads and large wings mostly of peacocks' feathers, though some are fledge with the 'gray goose plume.' The six-foot yew-bows which survive are of great strength and stiffness, and could not be strung except by a skilled artist of stout muscles. They were usually kept in cases of woollen, the spare strings being in a little box at the archer's baldric or belt, where his twelve arrows were borne. Flodden was the last important battle in which the bow played a chief part. It was last used in England in the Great Civil War, in irregular skirmishing.

The sling, a weapon almost coeval with the bow, never became as popular. Apart from David's victory over Goliath, the sling is scarcely spoken of in Scripture. Some of the wild tribes in the host of Xerxes carried slings, and there was always a corps of slingers attached to a Roman army, who sometimes projected pebbles, and sometimes bullets of iron or lead. But no nation ever evinced the same skill as the natives of the Balearic Isles, who, according to Pliny, could strike a mark at great distances with the sling, and refused food to their children until they could hit the desired object, set up as a target on a post. The air-gun, for propelling darts, was known to

the Greeks, but only as a toy, capable of killing small birds at a few paces. The blow-pipe for shooting arrows by the breath, seems to have been peculiar to South America. It is among the tangled forests of Demerara and Guiana that the red Indian carries to the chase his long cane-tube, five feet in length, and with his poisoned arrows brings down the birds from the top of the gigantic trees, or pierces the acousta, aloth, or squirrel, at a hundred feet off. The pellet-bow of the Gonds of Hindostan is another ingenious device, but cannot properly be called a weapon of war. The crossbow was of Norman invention, it is believed, though its origin is claimed for Italy. It never was a favourite English weapon, but those nations who were sorry shots with the longbow made great use of the arbalist, which, with its bender of steel or tough yew, its boll or butt, like that of a gun, and its groove, in which the steel-headed bolt lay secured until the trigger loosed the string, could send its dart above a hundred yards, with much force and precision. But the longbow had a superior range, for every English yeoman was expected to make good practice at twenty score, or four hundred yards. Now-a-days, the most accomplished toxophilite limits his efforts to a quarter of the distance. The spear thrown by hand is a very old weapon. The Orientals still make use of the djerid, a short javelin flung by a horseman, and it differs but little from the darts of their ancestors, which are nearly identical with the Roman pilum. The stout, short javelin was grasped with the whole hand, and thrown with great force; in a strong and practised hand, it did much execution, and the Anglo-Saxons, before Hastings, preferred the dart to the bow. All ancient nations used it during the classic epoch, and most savages have been found to use a light sharpened reed, thrown with the fingers rather than grasped in the hand. The Persians are still expert with the javelin, but it is a poor weapon, when opposed even to matchlocks.

The only other weapons, or more correctly engines, which the ancients possessed for throwing missiles, were the ballista, that hurled stones, and the catapult, that propelled darts, by mechanical force and human labour. The scorpion was a variety of catapult; the onager, or wild ass, a kind of ballista. The ballista was most useful in battering a fortress that could not be scaled or reached by the ram; Titus used a powerful train of them, throwing enormous stones, at the siege of Jerusalem; and Josephus records their effect upon the walls of Joppa. The catapult was generally mounted on the ramparts of a beleaguered city, to hurl darts among assailants, but was sometimes used by the besiegers to set on fire the hostile town, by means of flaming arrows. The ballista was used in the middle ages, and even when gunpowder was known. Edward I. employed these engines in battering the strong castle of Stirling, and it is said that they threw stones of three hundred pounds. The mangonel, or fixed cross-bow, was another Norman device. It was mounted on the walls of a town or castle, and the strong steel spring, wound up by a windlass, projected a heavy steel-shod bolt with considerable force, piercing any armour of ordinary manufacture. The sling was still used, but was held in slight esteem.

With respect to the Greek fire, that mysterious compound, and its effects, it is hard to separate the real from the fabulous. We may well believe, however, that it was the long bulwark of the Lower Empire, and the terror of the Mohammedans, and that its appearance was on the whole more dreadful than the actual effects produced. Still, it long repulsed the Saracens from the Greek capital, until a slave conveyed the secret to the califs; and the Arabians, in turn, directed its terrors against the original inventors. Princess Anna Comnena describes it—the Greek fire—in glowing terms; and we gather that it was a bituminous fluid, ignited, and

spouted forth from copper tubes, which projected from the bows of the Byzantine galleys, and were generally formed into the heads of dragons and other fantastic monsters, breathing flame from their gaping jaws. These floods of liquid fire sometimes proved unmanageable, as in the naval action between the fleet of the Emperor Alexius, in the Bosphorus, and that of the Crusaders under Baldwin, when the Greek admiral's awkwardness or misfortune produced the conflagration of his own vessels. But this was only one form of this famous fire. Joinville, the knightly chronicler of the Crusade, describing the *sea Gregeois* as applied to the attack of fortified places, speaks of a fiery dragon, 'about the thickness of a hog'shead, which flies with a noise like thunder, and shakes the citadel.' Here, probably, we may trace an earlier kind of war-rocket; and, indeed, long before Sir William Congreve's invention, the rocket was used in war, both in China and India, and occasionally in Persia and Transoxiana, according to D'Herbelot. The Indian rocket, especially, was a very formidable affair, furnished with iron bars to insure its adherence to any wooden building it might hit, and setting fire to all combustibles within reach of its jets of flame. The Greek fire was last employed in European strife at the siege of Ypres in 1383. Such, without enumerating devices of dubious authenticity—as the burning-glasses with which Archimedes fired the besieging galleys at Rhodes—were the means of offence of a missile nature possessed by the ancients. The discovery and application of gunpowder brought a new and tremendous agent into the field.

The earliest cannon, called bombardars, were clumsy constructions, composed of iron bars laid lengthwise, and hooped together with iron. In some cases, wooden planks were substituted for iron bars; and in Germany some bombardars were constructed of the trunks of trees, hollowed out, and encircled with iron hoops. The early cannon were very large and heavy, difficult to move, and slow to load. Their shape was ungainly, shallow, and wide-mouthed, and more resembling the old-fashioned mortar than what we call a cannon. They threw bullets of monstrous size, however, chiefly of stone, and made havoc with castle walls, or in a pitched field, though to charge them required above half an hour, and they burst frequently. Edward III. seems to have been the first monarch who employed cannon, in 1327, against the Scots, and afterwards at Cressy against the French. In the capture of Berwick from the Scots, the new cannon proved of signal utility, from the dismay and confusion produced among the besieged by so novel and resistless a danger. The enormous stone-bullet-throwing guns gradually became extinct, or, like Mons Meg at Edinburgh Castle, survived merely as curious relics; but at the taking of Constantinople, in 1453, Mohammed II. employed against the devoted city a thousand pieces of ordnance, the most powerful battering-train the world had ever beheld; and these guns threw stone-globes of great weight. The only effective monsters of the kind that still remain are the Titanic cannon which guard the passage of the Dardanelles, and which throw round bullets of white stone, cut by hand in the Magnesian quarries, and weighing a thousand pounds avoirdupois. It was one of these colossal missiles which snapped like a pipe-stem the mizen-mast of Admiral Duckworth's flag-ship, when the British squadron forced the passage of the Straits; and on this occasion, only four shots were fired, one of which parted into two pieces as it flew heavily hurtling across the narrow sea. One of these guns lies at the Castle of Europe, another on Asia Point, at the opposite castle, along with a pile of stone-balls, of which but thirty are made annually, at great expense. The Pacha of the Dardanelles, in 1854, presented two of these great bullets to the admiral commanding in chief, Sir James Dundas, by whom they were brought to England.

Very slow was the progress of improvement, even after guns began to be cast and bored, instead of being built of hoops and bars. Brass cannon, though too costly for national use, were made of great beauty and excellence for particular occasions, and were employed by the Spaniards and Portuguese in their maritime conquests, by the Barbary corsairs, and by most privateers. But brass guns have two great defects, besides that of expense—they soon grow dangerously hot, and must cool before they can be reloaded; and what is worse, they droop at the muzzle, become worn in the bore, and burn away at the touch-hole—all owing to the softness of the metal. Excellent bronze guns have been made, but their price is high; and the recent practice against the Tangstow Forts, in China, has proved that bronze is not equal to steel, the French *canons rayés* of the former metal having turned out less powerful by far than Sir W. Armstrong's gun. For centuries, the iron ordnance continued to be little esteemed, and gun-metal, a variety of bronze, harder than the fine bronze used by statuary, was the substance of which all the best cannon were made. It is needless to distinguish between culverins and sakers, falcons and falconets, and all the light wall-pieces and field-pieces that were gradually substituted for the old bombard. Queen Elizabeth's pocket-pistol, preserved at Dover Castle, and cast in Holland, as the Dutch inscription testifies, is a beautiful piece of artillery of its kind, and was long vaguely considered competent to throw 'a ball to Calais green,' an idea suggested by its remarkable length. Cast-iron ordnance was not made till the reign of Edward VI., nor mortars till that of Henry VIII., who employed them against Boulogne.

So our ancestors went on, first inventing the cannon that threw solid shot, then the mortar for projecting hollow spheres stuffed with powder and bullets, then the howitzer that improved upon the mortar, the petard to shiver gates, and the red-hot ball to fire shipping and buildings; until the medium gun and the long gun succeeded to the wide-mouthed carronade of the naval service, and field-pieces were made of lightness and portability sufficient for rapid evolutions in the presence of an enemy.

The pedigree of the present rifled-musket must be traced from the clumsy hand-cannon, a mere diminutive of a bombard, placed on a board, and fired with a match, through various stages, to the present form. After the hand-cannon gave place to the hand-gun, the arquebuse, caliver, and musket, all of which were matchlocks, or more correctly pieces, that required to be fired by a match, it was long before the soldier could dispense with a rest, and fire simply from the shoulder. One of Queen Elizabeth's musketeers, for instance, would have been encumbered with gun and matchbox, bandoliers and primer, a rest on which to fix his gun, and a spear or swayne's feather to stick in the ground in front of him, for his defence, and, lastly, with a sword and dagger, where now the soldier moves lightly, with his Enfield rifle and bayonet, against the foe. Prince Rupert, a most admirable marksman, and a better inventor than a general, was the great introducer of new weapons, in his day. He devised a revolver, or repeating firelock, a century and a half before Colonel Colt saw the light. To Rupert we owe the first wheel-lock or snapaunce, the parent of all flintlocks, as a means of discharging guns and pistols, and an improvement on the primitive match equal to that of percussion upon the flint itself. Rifling and other excellent amendments are ascribed to Rupert, who did more for the perfecting of firearms than any one for a century after. The rifle was first naturalised in America, where, in daily struggles with wild beasts and wilder men, the hardy colonists learned to appreciate that weapon which afterwards did such signal service against the royal troops, and from thence it was brought into use in Europe. But though the Tyrolese,

and other mountaineers, fond of the chase, adopted the rifle by the middle of the last century, our armies, and those of our neighbours, never employed it. By this time, the grenadiers had given up carrying the bag of hand-grenades to which they owed their name; Brown Bess had been taken into that high and intimate favour from which she was but the other day discarded, and the pike had been fairly voted obsolete. Battles were won by bayonet-charges, for the most part; and as a thousand cartridges were expended for every fatal shot, we need scarcely wonder at the immense amount of powder uselessly burned, or that many daring commanders should have obtained the repute of being bullet-proof. Indeed, the old smooth-bored musket, with its spherical ounce-ball, was much more useful as a pike-staff for the bayonet, than for absolute shooting. Unless by chance, or against great masses of men, no certain result could be looked for; no tuition was afforded to the troops; a marksman was supposed to be heaven-born, like a poet; and if a soldier could load and fire with rapidity and machine-like regularity, he was not to distress himself as to the destination of his ounce of lead. By most careful trials, with rests and without, under official scrutiny, it has been ascertained that at 100 yards not one ball could be induced to go straight to the mark. At about 30 yards, a good shot can fire with tolerable certainty, but the deflection of the bullet increases in geometrical ratio, and the leaden sphere flies off into space, a wandering comet.

Still there were reasons against arming the troops of any nation with the old, many-grooved rifle of the American hunter or the Jäger of Tyrol. Rifles of this kind are not fitted for the cartridge; they need the very nicest care in loading; their powder must be measured out to a grain, patches and balls adjusted with sportsman-like precision, the shot rammed well home, the mallet being often necessarily employed, while a rifle of this sort needs constant wiping, oiling, and internal polish. It was justly thought impossible to put into the hands of careless and ignorant men a weapon so delicate, so slowly charged, and so apt to foul. Then, too, the range of a Yankee rifle is inferior to that of a smooth-bored gun. The rotary motion of the bullet absorbs much of the force that should act in propelling; and the rifle of America, though effective at 100 yards, at 300 yards 'throws wild,' and delivers the ball with little power. The heavier German rifle is not of much real use over 200 yards; and even the huge two-ounce tiger-rifles and four-ounce elephant-rifles used in India are sighted only up to 300 yards, and seldom shoot truly at that range. Now, a smooth bore, with all its waste and windage, still throws the lead further than an old rifle, if only you can verify the fact by finding the ball, which you rarely can. I have myself found a bullet deeply imbedded in a tree, 240 yards from where I was firing at a mark, with round balls and a smooth bore. The long Moorish guns bring down wild-fowl with large shot at above 100 yards, and with ball at 180 yards, according to the authority of Mr Drummond Hay. There is at Woolwich a gun, once belonging to the king of Siam, of wonderful range; indeed the matchlocks and gingals of the East always outmatch our muskets, and during the recent operations in China, some of the Tartar gingal bullets fell among our people from a distance of 1400 yards—an extraordinary distance, almost equalling the Whitworth range. Smooth bores throw elongated shot much further and truer than spherical balls; and from partial experiments at Vincennes, it would almost seem as if there was more merit in the long bullet than in the two-grooved tube that projects it, and as if smooth bores deserved another trial with conical shot.

The invention of the two-grooved rifle, of the Lancaster polygonal rifle, and the successive improvements that bear the name of the Enfield, Minié,

Whitworth, Jacob, Prince, Henry, and others, struck the knell of the old fatalist system of random shooting. Scarcely a day elapses without the journals recording the praise or blame of some new breech-loading or muzzle-loading rifle, from the Prussian needle-gun to those wonderful devices that can be discharged twenty times in a minute, and which fire 1800 shots without fouling. The very worst of these is far better than the old musket or the old rifle. The muzzle-loading pieces can all of them be charged easily, a wooden rod and a light push being capable of ramming home the charge, where once, for rifle-loading, the mallet was needed, and great force used. Some muzzle-loaders emulate breech-loaders in celerity of charging, and merely require the cartridge to be dropped down the barrel, without a touch of the ramrod; while the breech-loading pieces, the best, in many respects, are beginning to be free from the old objection of wearing away at the joint, from the effect of the red-hot gases generated during explosion. The double rifle of General Jacob is a remarkably good, though costly arm, shooting a mile with six feet of elevation, and with a lower trajectory than most pieces, except the Whitworth. The rifle-shells and liquid fire-shells, invented by Captain Norton, General Jacob, and others, add tenfold to the efficiency and powers of the rifle, and at 900 yards, the practice at Hythe is always excellent, while the superior shots attain accuracy at ranges up to 1800 yards. For cavalry, the breech-loader is invaluable, although the double rifles long used by that very efficient body of sharpshooters, the Cape Mounted Rifles, are highly esteemed by all practical men. The revolver, though valuable in its way, requires great improvements before it can be put into the hands of the army at large. It is delicate, dangerous, and not trustworthy, from being so liable to get out of order; this remark applies chiefly to self-acting patents; but even Colt's pistol, which requires the use of both hands in cocking, is apt to be found disarranged in the hour of need. Many officers of great professional merit prefer a double pistol, loading at the breech, to any revolver.

Of the Armstrong gun, it is impossible to speak too highly: its power of rending masonry, and transpiercing targets; its terrific shell, dividing into fifty-eight fragments, with a separate death in each; its accuracy, range, and lightness, have been tested at home and in China. The Whitworth gun, and other cannon of its class, with their four, five, and six mile ranges, and great power, are wonderful improvements on ancient gunnery; but rockets remain nearly as Sir William Congreve left them. Capricious, though destructive engines, they have failed to realise their inventor's predictions, and supersede artillery. Yet rockets have the one great merit of requiring no gun to propel them; a light rocket-tube alone is wanted; and where transport is scarce, there is much to be said in favour of this modern emendation of the Greek fire, iron sheathed and stickless.

Weapons for hand-to-hand fighting are generically divided into clubs, axes, swords, spears, and daggers. The club is the oldest of all, but it only survives in the waddy of the Malay, and the cudgel of the Persian mountaineer; even the metal mace, which was copied from it, and the mail, used by knights in Western Europe, are now extinct. The short horseman's battle-axe used by the retentive Orientals, and the Indian tomahawk, are the only representatives of the war-hatchet. This, too, is an ancient weapon. The painted Britons had their little flint-axes, which we call celts; the Romans bore a *bipennis*, or double-bladed axe; the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, and after them the early English, with Richard the Lion-hearted at the head of them, used this kind of huge broad-bladed axe as a national weapon. The brown bill was as familiar to the hand of the Englishman as the yew-bow. But the bills went out with the defensive armour, and that weapon

was last seen in war when some of the Highlanders joined Charles Edward in the Forty-five, armed with the Lochaber axe, which had a hook at the end, for scaling walls. The spear is, of course, very ancient. Even now, the only weapon of the Pampas Indians is a long reed-spear, hardened by fire, and measuring from sixteen to twenty feet. The spear and pike were universal arms; all savages possess them: pikemen were once the staple of all armies, and knights knew no sport so joyous as the breaking of lances. But the use of the lance did not survive that of armour; and after the Spanish infantry, with short swords, had utterly routed the Teutonic Lanzknechts at Ravenna, those formidable stands of pikes, which had once seemed impregnable, fell into contempt. The lancers of European armies are seldom thought as efficient as other dragons; and though some of our Indian irregulars can perform prodigies of skill with the spear, the weapon is gradually giving place to the carbine. The dagger and dirk once played a great part in warfare, and still, in the East, the creese of the Malay is his best weapon; and the Ghoorka allies, with their kookies, or heavy curved knives, proved more than able to rout the sepoy in personal encounter. But the best use of the dagger was to suggest the bayonet. Tradition assigns this invention to a corps of Basques, or natives of the country near Bayonne, in the service of Louis Quatorze, who suddenly struck their long knives into the muzzles of their muskets, and with this improvised weapon routed the foe; hence 'bayonet' from Bayonne. This arm was first called a 'fixing dagger.' It was not in general use until Marlborough's wars, and since then has been constantly employed, being the soldier's best friend; and, indeed, the chief use of Brown Bess was to carry it. The sword-bayonet is a decided improvement on the old triangular blade; but the bayonet, in its present form, agrees ill with the modern arms of precision. The pressure of the bayonet-ring, in battle, causes an unequal expansion of the metal of the rifle-barrel, that is fatal to good shooting, and spoils the bore terribly. Moreover, no shot is likely to go straight that is fired from a piece with fixed bayonet, and the very shock given to the thin tube of the Enfield by a thrust with the bayonet, is most hurtful to the weapon's shooting qualities. If the musket, now meant for hitting as well as shooting, is still to be a pikestaff, it should have an extra rib attached to it, to which the bayonet might be adjusted with a catch, so as to save the inevitable injury done to the barrel.

The sword is an old and favourite weapon. It is older than history, and as old as legend itself. There have been, and there are, swords of every variety. The first swords were glaives and falchions of brass, and to these succeeded the broad curved scimitar of Asia, and the straight, short, double-edged sword with which the Romans conquered the world. The latter, called a Spanish blade, and forged at Toledo, was long the national weapon of Castile. Our riflemen (privates) bear a weapon nearly similar. While the East adhered to crooked blades, to those wonderful Damascus sabres that were said to cut metal like cloth, to the tulwars of India and the scimitars of the Saracens, the West ran into the opposite extreme, and for centuries the long, straight, two-handed sword was in fashion. Some of these tremendous blades, which were used on horseback and foot, were five feet long, not reckoning the handle. They could not be unsheathed without pulling the sword over the shoulder, and weighed above twenty pounds. The Tyrolean mountaineers used them against the French and Bavarians in Hofer's patriotic struggle against Napoleon; and some of the Highlanders, in 1715, still retained the true claymore—glaive, or *gladius-mhor*, the great sword, in Gaelic—which always required two hands. Then came the age of short weapons, of walking rapiers, of small swords, court swords, and

other mere toys; while, about the end of the last century, the cavalry of the British army were armed with an absurd scimitar, curved like a hoop, and incapable of giving point under any circumstances. The French invented the sword-bayonet, and the excellent broadsword which their cavalry have now used for sixty years. We followed suit, and our swords are now well enough shaped, and of fair steel; but they are generally blunt, and will remain so until we are blessed with military authorities modernised enough to give our dragoons a wooden or leathern sheath, and consign the old rattling iron scabbard to the limbo where Brown Bess now happily reposes.

WELSH YARNS.

IN TWO HANKS.

I AM going to babble for a few pages about a Sleepy Hollow village in South Wales, in which, when quite a youngster, I spent a year or two. I fancy—although, indeed, I hardly know why I should fancy—that my memories of the places and persons in it and about it may not be devoid of interest. I shall record my reminiscences at random as they rise.

I.

Here is the old, whitewashed, thatched farmhouse I visit almost daily, the pet of its honest, hearty inmates, who generally manifest their affection in huge hunks of apple-pasty. The front-door stands open all day long, and even at night is merely latched, for burglaries are unheard of in this Arcadian district. The room I enter is low, and dark, and close. From the ceiling depends a wooden framework, which looks like an inverted table that has sent its legs through the joists up into the room above. On its boards lie sides of bacon, 'backstone cakes' (thin grindstones of unleavened flour, water, and salt, baked on a round iron plate), the apple-pasties which are treats to me, but the ordinary fare of the farm-servants (Titanic tarts, a yard long, almost a foot wide, and four inches thick), an old boot, a straw horse-collar, and a fowling-piece covered with cobwebs, from the barrel of which dangles a pair of rusty spurs, with broken rowels, and cracked and shrivelled straps. Like a black swan upon its nest, sits on the hearth a mighty kettle, snugly surrounded with gray, feathery wood-ash and smouldering wood-ember of a sullen red. The kettle in South Wales is scarcely ever cold, 'a dish of tea' being the Welsh hostess's 'glass of wine'—the beverage she offers to her very numerous gossips. On each side of the yawning fireplace—as big as a small room—runs a wooden settle, on which, in the long winter evenings, master and mistress, man and maid, sit sociably together, smoking, knitting, harness-mending, and coquetting. Facing the fire, there is a double tier of bed-closets of oak—dully gleaming with grease and friction—just like 'bunks' on board ship. One of the rooms above has two such tiers, affording, with its camp-bedstead in the middle, sleeping 'accommodation' for nine persons; here, as below, of different sexes. The other room, known as 'the prophet's chamber'—being set apart for the exclusive use of the Methodist 'travelling-preacher' from the 'circuit-town,' on his fortnightly visits—contains a rickety four-poster, with curtains of white dimity, a chintz-cushioned arm-chair, a toilet-table made out of towel-covered tea-chests, and bearing a cracked looking-glass (which, in addition to its crack, possesses the imperfection of making every one who looks into

it appear to have the mumps), piled volumes of Wesley's *Notes and Sermons*, in beef-gravy-coloured binding, and his Hymn-book, in rough, red sheep; whilst round the walls are hung sundry black-framed portraits, cut out of the *Arminian Magazine*, of Messrs This, That, and Tother, 'preachers of the gospel,' who seem to have considered it essential to their evangelical character to brush their hair straight down over their foreheads, as if in readiness for the operation of the small tooth-comb.

From the combined kitchen and 'keeping-room,' already described, opens on the left the 'parlour,' a small angular chamber, with a planked floor (whereas that of the other room is partly flagged, and partly made of 'concrete,' worn here and there into deep hollows). One of the corners holds a triangular cupboard, full of gaily-coloured crockery—'decanter' is the local phrase—constantly exposed to view, since one of the valves of the double-door has been wrenched from its hinges, and, according to careless Cambrian custom, never replaced; and the other, from the want of a bolt, rests against the black oak panelling of the wall. On the side-table, propping and flanking a tea-tray, emblazoned with a bird of nondescript genus but most brilliant plumage, lie a county history, Fox's *Martyrs*, and Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, in ponderous folios and quartos. Above it are two hanging bookshelves, holding *inter alia* some book on physics, Blackstone's *Commentaries* (full of portraits of fat-faced judges, whose flowing wigs I contrast with the scanty locks of the ministers above stairs, arriving at a dim conclusion that Law commands, whilst Gospel forbids the use of bear's grease), Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (which I have to read upon the sly, and therefore enjoy so far, but of which I can make neither head nor tail), and Henry, Earl of Moreland. The last I have full liberty to peruse, it having been republished by 'the great and good Mr Wesley,' as the one novel in the world fit for Christians to read. Over the mantel-piece, circled with silhouettes of less famous members of the family, and even placed above the portraits of the Rev. John and Charles Wesley and Mr Fletcher of Madeley, hangs a miniature of a bright-haired, blue-eyed young man in naval uniform. On the mantel-piece, buttressed with spiny-backed, smooth and pink lipped tropical shells, stand a quadrant and a dirk. The black leather of the sheath, and the black wood of the mysterious instrument, are mildewed, and the brass of both is streaked and dotted with a bluish green; for long before I was born, they were sent home as the last relics of the young midshipman, who had risen from before the mast to be cut down, not in fair fight with the French, but by sunstroke in the Gulf of Mexico, to his proud, sorrowful father in the far-off Welsh hamlet. I have heard the story from the old man, who has outlived his six stalwart sons, and now lives with his son-in-law, to whom he has given up his farm.

Dressed in brown coat of Quaker cut, knee-breeches, stockings of undyed yarn, and buckled shoes, and with his long iron-gray hair combed back over his collar, the patriarch—whose only duty now is to preach on Sundays in the little chapel he built long ago, on the other side of the front-yard—crosses his hands upon his horn-headed staff, and tells me many stories. How, when a youth, he and another youth rescued John Wesley from a mob, to whom he had come to preach on the hillside; how they set him on his feet again, and stood by him whilst he preached; how, suddenly as the sun went down, a universal terror seized the mocking crowd, and wild screams rent the stillness of the twilight—those who had been fiercest

seeming most afraid—some of them in their agony of horror wallowing and foaming on the ground. How, happening to turn his head one day as he was ploughing, he saw the French fleet standing in for the bay, when, leaving the plough in the furrow, and the oxen to look after themselves, he darted home, put on his Fencible uniform, and snatched up his musket; how the drum beat for the Fencibles to muster on the green, whilst the lightest boy that could be found was sent off on the fleetest horse at full gallop to the nearest military station with the news; how the women and children were hurried inland, but after all, when almost inside the bay, the French ships tacked, and proceeded northwards. How, when he was quite a boy, there was a dreadful famine and fever in the village; how the poor died in their cottages like rotten sheep, with none to tend them, none to bury them, or roamed about like spectres, praying the farmers to give them food; how, when his father refused them corn, his mother used to get up at midnight, steal into the barn furthest from the house, and pour wheat and barley into the aprons of the wretched women clustered outside; and how neither she nor the miller who ground the corn for them gratis, took the fever themselves or lost one of their households, whilst almost all the farmers had sickness and death in their families. How, in the days when tea was very dear, the farmers' wives used to club together for a pound, and assemble at my farmhouse to drink it when their husbands had gone to market, afterwards hiding the tea-pot in the wood-stack in the rickyard. How the lone ruined cottage on yonder mountain side was haunted by the spirit of a man who had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost—a spirit with such awful eyes that any one who looked upon them was instantly struck blind; and how, through the broken windows of the untenanted farmhouse in the valley, devils might be seen dancing on the anniversary night of the death of the last tenant, who, forty years ago, administered a sham-sacrament to his drunken boon-companions, and fell down in their midst a corpse. How there had long been a feud between the family at the Castle (which Oliver Cromwell battered, afterwards stabling his horses in the barn between my farmhouse and the chapel) and the B—s of R—, one of these, four generations back, having married and murdered one of those; how her brother, a ship-master, then in the Isle of Man, saw the murder committed in a dream, and when he came back, had his sister's coffin taken up to prove it; how a nail was found driven into the skull behind the ear; how the murderer was hanged; and how, ever since, the two kindred families had abstained from all friendly intercourse, and often fought when they met at market.

Sitting in the shade of the lilac tree that checkers the sunlit front-yard, and by its luscious clusters—ever blooming in my memory—counteracts the unsavoury odours of the adjacent *mecha* (a yard entered by two whitewashed gateways without gates, and devoted to cow-houses and a monstrous oblong dung-hill); or on the green mouldering bench of the summer-house, in a garden a medley of leeks, nettles, cabbages, roses, docks, slovenly box-borders, and milk-white blossomed privet, and with ivy growing over its gray, lichen-mottled walls; or lolling in the warm grass—starred with buttercups, or snowed with apple-blossom—of the little orchard on the other side of the lane, in company with the farm-dog, Pincher, who cocks his clipped ears and blinks his absurd eyes ever and anon, as if he would make-believe that he fully understood everything that was being said—I listen to the old man's tales, very proud that he should think me worth talking to; for though he does believe in ghosts and dreams, and may, perhaps, as a superannuated man, be treated at times with scant respect by those of his own household, I know that he is 'the Oracle of Law, Divinity, and Physic' to all that

country-side, having made more wills than any attorney, preached more sermons than any parson, and cured more people than any doctor in it. The curate, the Methodist minister, and the pedler (a greater man than either of the former, in my estimation, because he can tell us so much of the outside world, when he pays us his rare visits), all like to chat with the old man, and listen attentively to his replies. Besides, has he not written poetry, and dialogues, and things which have been printed in the Swansea newspaper, which we get once a week; and to a child like me, is not the man who has appeared in print something more than human.

The orchard stile adjoins the upper village-shop, the principal wares in which seem to be peppermint drops and candles. A little further on, on the other side, is a hollow, into which the ewes belonging to the farm are driven night and morning to be milked; and very delicious sheep's milk it is, and splendid curds and whey it makes, as I, a frequent visitor of the farm-dairy, and a favourite even with the grim 'Aunt Betty'—all women past forty are aunts, all men past fifty uncles, in this part of the world—who presides over it in a faded plaid 'bedgown' and crushed black hat, can testify from ample experience. Further on, still, is the village-green, where geese and donkeys most do congregate; a solid, whitewashed, low-pitched, thatched farmhouse, dating from long before the Commonwealth, and conferring the third village patent of gentility on its tenant—the first appertaining to the parsonage, the second to the Castle farm, and the fourth to that with which the reader is already familiar—and a few whitewashed, thatched cottages, with tumble-down lean-to stables, in which, when not turned out to graze upon the Marsh (almost every cottager in Our Village owns a horse, the horses being fed upon chopped furze and potatoes), circle the green. In front of each cottage-door, on one night of the year—St John's Eve, I think—a furze-fire flames and crackles. On some holiday—King's Birthday, Coronation Day, or such like—I am jolting over the green in one of the country cars, a springless vehicle with a high-railed back, like an old-fashioned chair for a giant set on wheels. The horse that draws it has a blinkerless headstall, and a cart-saddle over which a thick chain passes, and the reins are made of rope. A simple halter is often the car-horse's only bridle. We are going to spend our holiday in a picnic at a headland in the neighbourhood, renowned for wrecks. As we leave the village behind us, the country becomes more open. Breezy downs, with undulations as bright and smooth and graceful as the folds of a green velvet robe, sweep down to beaches which no foot seems to tread; or, previously cropping out in limestone boulders, are abruptly terminated by limestone crags. Presently, we pass through more than one village inhabited by people of an unknown tongue, who, when they speak, seem to be in a furious passion because they cannot spit out something sticking in their throats. The English we have left behind is not remarkable for orthodoxy or syntax—'brag' being its equivalent for 'brig,' and 'come he,' 'come she,' its forms of what *should* be the second person singular of the imperative—but, at all events, it is more intelligible and euphonious than this awful Welsh, which it appears impossible to pronounce without hemorrhage.

Arrived on the north side of our little Morea—a turf-capped lofty wall of ruthless cliffs, gradually sinking on the right into a broad flat beach, behind which a lonely little white parsonage looks out upon the bright blue waves—we see the Inner and the Outer Head: the former, a raised, grassy tableland, separated at high-tide from the shore; the latter, a tall stern gray crag, with one patch of turf upon its landward side, joined to the Inner Head by a low, curved, narrow isthmus of rock, that affords no footing in

the calmest weather, and over which in storm the water hurries and hisses in seething snow. White-brown sheep are grazing on the Inner Head; and on the Outer stands a black-faced ram, gazing in stupid fear down on the wide chasm he has been unaccountably impelled to leap. With plenty of rich grass upon the Inner Head, the scanty bit of herbage surely cannot have been his inducement. Back he must jump again, or stay there till he dies; for the Outer Head, rising in proud, gloomy perpendicularity, like a truncated, splintered pillar, is inaccessible to man. Many and many a time, when the white spray has been driven by the howling wind in a zigzagging, interlacing shower high over its tall head, have fingers clutched frantically and fruitlessly at the wave-worn column, to which even sea-weed cannot cling; and then the wrathful sea, which smiles so sweetly now, has dragged back its victims, and choked them in its returning rush. Here and there, a crowbar is firmly fixed along the edge of the cliff; to the bar is fastened a rope, and to the rope a quarryman, plying his trade as he sways hither and thither in mid-air, or plants himself on a projecting narrow platform. In a plumb-line course, or bounding from ledge to ledge, the great boulders of limestone seek with a sullen splash the sand beneath the brine, and are carted away at low-tide. Half-way between the cliff-top and the beach, there is a hollow known as the Devil's Cave. How far it runs inland, is not known. The quarrymen, who take their meals here, and leave their tools here, have never ventured to go further in than some two hundred yards. Here, at sundown, the story goes, whenever that night, or the next day, a brave ship will be dashed to pieces on the pitiless Outer Head, the Evil One kindles a fire, whose lurid flames burnish the dusky billows with a bloody, troubled brilliance. When that long line of ill-omened light is seen trembling on the sea, the fishing-boats fly back to port; and 'Heaven and hell will be fuller before to-morrow night,' say the cottagers on the hillsides.

Besides hunks of apple-pasty, Aunt Betty's curds and whey, the old man's stories, stumpy-tailed Pincher's company, and Henry, Earl of Mordand, I have other inducements to draw me up to the old farm—up the Castle Hill, and through the Castle farm-yard (a route I do not much affect, having a dread of E., the half-mad tenant of the Castle, a dried-up little man in rusty black, who stops his pony when he sees me coming, keeps calling out 'Boy!' until I have got up to him, then lifts his whip, stares at me for a moment, and trots on without saying another word; and also of a huge boar, with tusks like little sickles, which always will plant itself against the farm-yard gate when I want to open it); or mounting with difficulty the smooth stone slab with zigzag stone steps on both sides, which is the South Welsh stile, through the garden at the back of the Bull Inn (wherein I more than once espy the pretty young landlady being very heartily kissed, and am thereupon kissed by her, presented with halfpence, and earnestly adjured not to tell my 'mar' or anybody else what I have seen, under penalty of a visitation from Bogie that very night), through E.'s close, and through the elm-shaded green park, and the rock-dotted 'Yetlands' (in one or other of which last two, although I escape E. and E.'s boar, I am almost sure to see E.'s fiery-eyed bull shambling from the furthest corner of the meadow to cut me off before, with my heart in my mouth, I can gain the asylum of the gate or stile); or past the front of the public-house, where the small crews of the few coasters that now and then visit the bay are looked upon with great reverence by the other revellers as experienced mariners who have seen the world, and know yonder English hills—resting on the sea in the horizon, a filmy cloud of wood-smoke blue—as well as they know Cefn B—; through the lower village, with

its green, stagnant duckponds, its whitewashed hovels, so clean without, so foul within ('What's the use of scrubbing a floor?' says many a Welsh cottager; 'it'll get dirty again'); its shop, more ambitious than that in the upper village, displaying sundry rolls of gaudy ribbon, with a bladder of lard on one side and a box of raisins on the other; its beer-shop, frequented by the 'fast young men' of the neighbourhood—'Tom of the Parsonage' (a saucy English groom), and one or two labourers on whom the squire's gamekeeper has his eye; its weaver's, where I stand for half an hour watching through the window the shuttle dart fish-like through the tight upright threads; its tiny Baptist chapel, whither on Sunday afternoons grown-up people, even gray-haired men and women, as well as children, 'go to Sunday-school'; and up the steep, narrow, rocky Holloway—a lane like the dry bed of a torrent, which leads between high hedges, whose dog-rose sprays marry blushfully overhead, and on whose banks the foxglove in profusion nods its bells, to the foot of the wall of the old farm's garden.

When I reach the quaint old place, there is the young bull-calf, with budding horns, like marbles driven into his forehead, to ride and tease—to make a scape-calf of for the iniquities of his papa in the Yetlands; or the lane is blocked up with penned-in sheep, and the front-yard littered with wool, and filled with squatting men, and struggling or pensively resigned wethers and ewes yielding their fleeces to the shears, whilst those already shorn trot off, shivering and perplexed, but still pleased to find themselves on their legs again, to the home close; or a bullock is to be killed in the barn, and, when killed, divided between the house and one or two neighbouring farms, which subsequently will return the compliment (a system of mutual accommodation rendered necessary by the circumstance that there is no butcher's shop in the village, and which the cottagers imitate when they kill their pigs); or hay or corn is being carted in the primitive vehicles, which probably preserve the fashion which prevailed centuries ago—shafts, with connecting battens at the bottom, and a high back, set on a pair of low wheels; or they are burning lime in the briar-embosomed kiln in the 'off-farm,' and want a horse to be sent them; when, if bay, black-maned Diamond or chestnut-coloured Phillis be at home—the black mare Violet is too young and skittish for my guidance—I am hoisted on to the back of the big beast, feeling as if I were a mahout on an elephant, and despatched at an amble, jolting from side to side with legs stretched out like a pair of open compasses, along the freshly scented lanes; or, if the day be rainy, I 'play at parsons' with golden-haired little Tilly in the chapel, banging away on the desk of the green-baize movable pulpit in orthodox style, until I am almost smothered with the dust; and then, knocking down my rostrum, I chase my 'congregation' over the forms which serve for pews, until I obtain my stipend in the shape of sundry kisses, boxes on the ear, and scratches.

THE CHINESE AT HOME.

AMONG the many plans resorted to for introducing Christianity in civilised pagan communities, that of combining the duties of the missionary and medical professions appears to have succeeded best. The experiment has been going on for many years in China; and a work lately placed before the public by one of the labourers, Mr William Lockhart, proves to be one of decided interest.

During the many years in which he was placed in daily, almost hourly, contact with the inmates of the hospitals, Mr Lockhart obtained a close insight into their character; and this knowledge is placed before the reader in such a plain unpretending way, that, although you are told to consider it only a sketch of

the people and their dispositions, you lay down the book with the conviction that you have at last learned what a Chinaman really is. Strange, indeed, is the character we see—presenting such a heterogeneous mass of good and bad, selfishness and piety, of amiable feeling and barbarous cruelty, as we could scarcely beforehand have speculated upon as a thing of this world.

'Filial obedience,' says Mr Lockhart, 'is recognised as the foundation of their institutions, popular and governmental; and the principle is universally developed in a manner which has no parallel in any other nation.' The son will give his life for the father—the father for the son. An instance of this came before the notice of a relation of the writer while quartered in China. A Chinese boatman had murdered an English sailor, but escaped. Some time afterwards, a decrepit old man came and asked to see the captain of the vessel. He announced himself to be the father of the murderer, and said he had come to die for his son, as he was old, and had not many months to live, while his son's life was young.

Filial obedience being the foundation of their code of religion, they appear to have reaped the promise of the commandment, being the oldest empire in the world. Next to this virtue comes the desire after knowledge and wisdom. We have all heard of the learning of the Chinese, yet few of us are aware to what an extent this desire is carried, or how highly the result is prized. Every village possesses its school, and boys of all ranks are sent thither at an early age. Young as they are, they seem aware of the value of education, and are quiet, industrious pupils. When the village preparatory school has been gone through, a boy is placed under the charge of a more accomplished master, and by him led through the Chinese classics, and crammed for the local examinations, which are three in number, and are conducted under the superintendence of the magistrate. Those who pass, obtain their degree, and then go in for a second examination, which qualifies them for a third, the Sew-tsae. This is an affair productive of intense and general excitement. Lists of the candidates are placed upon the city walls, and crowds wait outside the examination-hall to hear the result. As soon as the list of the successful candidates appears, hundreds of copies are struck off and sold to hawkers, who run about the town selling their good or bad news, carrying a small yellow flag as an advertisement—a decided improvement upon the noisy vociferations of our English hawkers.

As the students are all anxious to despatch messages to their homes, and they have no electric telegraph, they are provided with carrier-pigeons, which carry the sentence of success or disappointment, written upon a slip of stiff thin paper, rolled up and tied to the leg of the bird in the usual manner.

The possession of this first degree is a great advantage. Among other things, the holder is exempted from corporal punishment, and is in reality rendered henceforth independent, almost every civil post and distinction being open to him. This, however, is only the first step on the ladder. The next is the Ken-jin; the third, the Tsin-sye—the latter meaning much the same as our LL.D. A fourth examination takes place every third year, and gives the highest rank attainable—namely, that of literary chancellor. The Ken-jin examination is very difficult, and so severe, that many of the examiners, as well as students, sink under the immense tension of mind and body. Two instances came under the immediate treatment of Mr Lockhart in his capacity of doctor. Two gentlemen of the rank of literary chancellors applied to the hospital, both being afflicted with paralysis, which had been brought on by the severe and long mental exertion required at the examination for Ken-jin, at which they had been superintendents.

Another of the Chinese virtues is charity. They

spend both time and money for the relief of their less fortunate brethren; and in every town they provide hospitals and asylums for the succour of the wretched. The native practitioners give their services gratuitously, while the chemists take it in turn to supply the necessary medicines, for all of which nothing is demanded; and the only thing required is that, if possible, the friends of the patient must supply him with food. They have cemeteries where the poor are buried, 'though,' says the report of one of the Shang-hae dispensaries for 1845, 'it is far more praiseworthy and meritorious to attend to persons while they are alive than to afford coffins for them when they are dead.' The foundling hospitals are well supported, the children being taught either to follow some trade, or to be domestic servants, while many of them are adopted by childless couples. Next in order comes the Humane Society, for the recovery of the drowned; though, if the methods of restoring animation mentioned by the author are always put in force, we should prefer to be drowned effectually in any portion of the globe to being revived in the Celestial Empire.

While so sedulous to heal the sick, the Chinese are even further behind than most European nations in the art of preventing disease; they make the open drains in the middle of each street the receptacles of every description of filth and refuse. These communicate with the numerous canals that intersect almost every Chinese city, and in time the canal becomes literally blocked up. When it reaches this pitch, something must be done for the sake of navigation; and what is done is simply this: the deposit is shovelled up and laid in gigantic heaps upon the banks, in the streets, or elsewhere, in any convenient place. The consequent effluvia are dreadful, and however callous a Chinaman's olfactory nerves may become, his health must suffer. Strange to say, in what appears to our ideas such a 'very hot-bed of cholera,' that fearful disease has been no more prevalent than in countries where more attention is paid to sanitary rules. Though cholera keeps aloof, other fevers are frequently met with; but on the whole, the scale of disease is wonderfully low, the reasons apparently being these, that the people spend most of their time in the open air; that the construction of their houses allows free ventilation; and, lastly, that they wear warm clothing during the cold months, and are thus enabled to retain a comfortable and healthy degree of warmth, without having resource to hot air, close rooms, and imperfect ventilation, which are now generally acknowledged to be the prolific source of consumption and diseases of the respiratory organs.

Much as we are addicted to 'a cup of tea,' the Chinese love it still more. With them, the kettle is always boiling, the tea-cup always at your service. Shops appropriated to tea-drinking are regularly authorised, and placed under the surveillance of the police. Here friends meet to chat, smoke, and drink tea, often listening to the eloquence of some scholar, who is invited by the proprietor to amuse and attract his customers.

Hatching eggs by artificial heat had, it would seem, its origin in China, and is extensively carried on. 'In the vicinity of most of the cities are large establishments for the hatching of ducks. These houses comprise a suite of long low rooms, with several offices attached. The country people, in the spring and summer months, bring large quantities of eggs, which are purchased at a cheap rate. These are put in flat baskets into a sort of fireplace made of brick and plaster, open at the top and closed below, much like the recess for a boiler. Below the open space is a very small charcoal fire, to warm the mass of brick. When the place is warm enough, the basket of eggs is lodged within, and covered over by a thick plaited straw-pad, to retain the heat; and after a day or two the basket

is removed to another similar recess, which is slightly warmer. The eggs are turned over once each day, and carefully excluded from cold air or wind. After the required number of days, close upon the time of production, they are taken out of the baskets, and laid side by side upon a large table; the table is about thirty feet long by fifteen wide, and covered with cotton wadding. When the eggs, to the number of a thousand or more, are arranged, they are covered with a thin cloth, and over this one or more thick cotton quilts are placed; the removal of these, as soon as the ducklings are found ready to break their shells, reveals an extraordinary scene. In all directions, the little creatures are working themselves free, causing a curious crackling from the fracture of the shells. An attendant watches the table day and night, to remove them as they emerge all folded up, and apparently very weak, but soon scrambling over the other eggs. They are removed to a basket in a warmer room, and fed by and by with flour and water. In a day or two, their down has grown sufficiently to cover them, when they are sold to persons who come from the neighbourhood periodically to buy them. The process is carried on only during spring and summer, and the house is used for a lodging-house for the rest of the year.

Every one who reads Mr Lockhart's book will feel he has really obtained an insight into the character of a people he until now only knew as a nation, and must feel interested deeply in the success of the working out of the system of medical missionaries.

THE ROUNDABOUT RAILWAY.

I CANNOT conceal from myself that one of the most prominent facts of my everyday life is the Roundabout Railway. Every seven minutes and a half of my waking existence, that wonderful institution asserts itself so clamorously, that I am in no danger of forgetting it; and though I have long ceased to consider it a nuisance, as I once did—for habit reconciles us to everything—I have not yet arrived at the happy condition of the Yankee waiters at the Niagara Hotel, who, deaf, through custom, to the roaring of the waters, can hear a pin drop on the floor, in spite of their everlasting thunder; so I hear each recurring train as it rushes through its deep ditch of a cutting at some fifty paces from my fireside, and can time my movements by them, if I like, without looking at my watch. I quarrelled savagely with the Roundabout Railway at its first intrusion some years ago, and grumbled at it and its projectors like a Briton, as I had a right to do; then I began to tolerate it—then to make a convenience of it—and at last to like it. In the course of the last seven years or so, I have taken all manner of advantages of the Roundabout Railway, and now I mean to turn it to account once more by getting an article out of it.

The Roundabout Railway is the pet of the Londoners, being patronised by them to a much greater extent than any of our iron roads; and it owes its popularity to its excellent character for punctuality and safety, as well as for some other special qualities and conveniences which will make themselves evident as we proceed. It abounds in stations and termini, in London and out of London, and at all points of the compass. People walk on to it from a level; they climb up to it by endless flights of stairs; they get down to it through long galleries and shafts and staircases combined; and they burrow underground to get at it, and emerge upon its platforms through trap-doors, like the ghost of Hamlet at Sadler's Wells. Then, while it is the most cosmopolitan of all roads, doing hourly business with all imaginable grades of society, and travelling to and from all points of the compass at once, it is at the same time the most intrusive and impertinently

familiar of all the railways reckoned up in *Bradshaw*. It is positively shocking to see the liberties it takes, and the rude manner in which it mixes itself up with the private and domestic concerns of us modern Babylonians. Starting from the very centre of the old city, upon a level with the tiles and chimney-pots, it cuts and carves its way among the dwellings in the most remorseless manner. Here it knocks off a roof, a stack of chimneys, and an outhouse or two; there it shaves away a gable-end; and anon it cuts Mr Perkins's dormitory into halves, leaving only a moiety for that gentleman's truckle-bed and wardrobe. The effect of its coming to such close quarters among the lieges is a very various kind of revelation to the men of observation who travel by it—a sort of obligatory introspection into the *sancta sanctorum* of numberless domestic temples, whose mysteries, but for its impertinence, had been sealed for ever from the gaze of the curious.

As one is whirled along the line, little interesting spectacles are presented to us seriatim in a species of endless living diorama. We see now the family washing getting up in the garret, where Mrs Suddles and the two eldest Miss Suddles are rubbing away elbow deep in three several tubs, while a third damsel, in a state of picturesque dishabille, is expediting the preparations for drying on the roof. Then it is policeman Z 25, snoring under the blankets, with the window thrown up just to let in the steam from the engines, by way of a refresher, this close muggy morning, while his glazed hat is airing on the window-sill. Next it is a cobbler seated at his kit in his 'parlour next to the sky,' and hammering away at the sole of a Blucher boot, while five little cobblers in *futuro* pause from pottering among the bristles and wax-ends to gape open-mouthed upon the flying train. Then there is the fat beadle of Waddlebrook Within, in that six feet state-berth of his, fussing about amidst his gold bands, his purple plush inexpressibles, his magnificent robe of office, all glittering with the precious metal, and his huge mountain of a cocked-hat. He has about as much space in his garret as a terrier caught in a rat-trap, or a silk-worm in its cocoon, and has to wriggle perspiring to get himself into his finery. But for the rush of the train, you would hear the marriage morning bells pealing from Waddlebrook steeple. Mr Beadle hears their loud banging all too plainly, and it is that he may be in time to meet the wedding faces at the church door, that he works so hard at shuffling on his mortal coil. Another moment, and there is Mrs Maggs, the fish-porter's wife, dishing up a smoking mess of something substantial for Maggs's breakfast, who, having been walking up and down ladders in Billingsgate Market, with a couple of hundredweight or so on his head, ever since three o'clock this morning, wants to fall-to without a moment's delay. You see his cavernous jaws dilate at the instigation of the savoury fumes, but you see no more, for you whiz past—and lo! there lies poor Bolter, who is down in the ague, all solitary and forlorn, and tucked in among the physic bottles, to shiver himself well again as fast as he can, having nobody to console him the while, because Mrs Bolter is obliged to be off scouring the streets with the hand-cart of whelks, periwinkles, and stewed eels, in order to keep the pot boiling for the benefit of the little Bolters and her sick husband. Then comes the seamstress at work upon a fourpenny shirt, with her worn wan face close to the window; or perhaps it is the sackmaker, earning a better wage at coarser work, and stitching away with her packthread to make up her bundle for the wharf; or, better still, it may be the shoebinder, working cheerily in expectation of the fair reward that sweetens toil. And lo! there, an empty chamber with a bill up announcing a lodging to let—lodgings—with a look-out against the black brickwork of the railway viaduct, exactly twenty-

seven and a half inches from your nose : who wouldn't be tempted with such a prospect ? You note, as you sweep along, that in a good proportion of the windows, spite of the smoke and the steam of the engines, the omnipresent soot and blacks and chimney-blessings, there are flowers that elsewhere would be all a-growing and a-blowing, but here are withering and fading away, and that numerous dingy pots, empty or tenanted only by a dry twig, attest the persevering attempts of the denizens of this dusty region to convert it into a garden.

All these things, however, are but a vision of a few minutes, and then the scene rapidly changes. First there is a wider prospect ; the city with its domes, and spires, and towers spreads itself out to view, while in the other direction a forest of masts and yards mingles with the stacks of chimneys, and an unmistakable odour of pitch and tar and mouldy cordage is borne upon the breeze. Then the train stops, and if you are bound to the river-side, you get out, and transfer yourself to another, in company with numbers of jolly young watermen, or ancient mariners, and whatsoever things are of the brine, briny, all the way from Wapping to Woolwich.

But not being bound to the river-side, you bid adieu to affairs marine, and skurry on in a direction inclining to the northward, and ere long you have exchanged the urban and commercial for the suburban and rural. You rush over other railways, and under other railways, and across other railways ; London begins to retire on the left, and the broad level country open on the right ; and there glinting fitfully under yon white cloud, if you are sharp enough to catch a glimpse of it, you may see the river Lea—old Izaak Walton's river Lee—meandering its way through the meadows and marshes into the Thames ; and perhaps you may remember that it was there that the pious old biographer of George Herbert and John Donne, while he impaled his living, writhing baits upon the barbed hook, 'handled them tenderly,' dear good man, as a Christian should do, 'because they are God's creatures.' In a few moments more you are at Bow, where was the 'scole' at which Chaucer's prioress learned her indifferent French, and which was famous for its cakes and cream in the days of bluff Harry the many-wived. From this point you begin to range along the limits of the recreative region affected by Eastern London. Victoria Park stretches almost down to the railway embankment, and country alehouses, taverns, and tea-gardens approach still nearer, taking, in fact, a position as close to the line as they are allowed to come. Thither resort the lieges from Shoreditch, Spitalfields, Bethnal Green, and Whitechapel ; and there you see them lounging at ease on summer evenings under clouds of tobacco-smoke, or flying their pigeons, or labouring at skittles, or gymnasticising among the poles, swings, and cross-bars. And see, down in yon paddock there is a tent pitched, with the union flag flying from the central pole, and long tiers of benches ranged on the left, for the convenience of the sporting gentlemen who are inclined to venture a little spare cash on that tall fellow in the azure vest and white pants, bound above the knees with a tricolour ribbon, who is stepping out so vigorously along the beaten path fringing the boundaries of the paddock. That is the celebrated pedestrian, Slapper, who has pledged himself to do sixty-five measured miles a day for twelve consecutive days of twelve hours each—and is at this moment doing it. Slapper is a grand favourite with the connoisseurs of pedestrianism ; it was he who licked the famous teetotal champion down at Scranford Beggs, and walked him off his legs in nine days—an exploit which the teetotal chroniclers said nothing about. He is doing the present unrivalled feat for a purse of a hundred guineas, as the placards have it—and we heartily wish he may get it—though who is to pay the money does not appear. It is rather monotonous and weary work for the stalking professor :

it has rained cats and dogs for six days out of the nine that he has already trudged it, and he cannot shirk a single yard of the allotted measure in the face of the time-keepers who are there to register his daily doings. His patrons and backers drop in from time to time to see how he is getting on ; and as the decisive hour approaches, there will be a rush from all quarters to the scene of action, to witness his triumph or his defeat, and a grand explosion of pigeons from pockets and bags, to carry the news to the sporting editors.

As a rival attraction to the walking phenomenon, another rural hostel announces a bout at single-stick on a fair stage every evening, open to all England, and calls upon all the lovers of a broken head to come and enjoy that supreme luxury free, gratis, for nothing ; the only stipulation being, that you shall subscribe a sovereign in case of your winning the silver cup, which is honestly worth five-and-twenty shillings, but which, as the challenger is a notorious adept in his elegant art, and has broken three hundred heads within the last three months, is not a very probable event. A third speculator gets up a wrestling-match, also open to all England, under conditions somewhat similar ; and a fourth, soaring a little higher, and with a view, no doubt, to family patronage, sports a balloon, which you may see from the railway lifting its huge bald head among the trees, and awaying this way and that in the driving rain.

The train again pulls up at Hackney station, and you look down upon the old church with its time-worn tower, and the quondam village, with its orchards and gardens, and teeming population, now a vast suburb, and almost itself a city. Here lived Pope's miser, John Ward ; here were the mansions of the old nobles, Vere, Rich, and Brooke ; here Matthew Henry preached and commented ; and here Strype, the historian, lectured for more than thirty years, and here died—a nonagenarian.

Although we started from the city with our faces eastward, we are journeying due west shortly after leaving Hackney, and are running in a straight line for Merry Islington. And here we can but remark how wonderfully the landholders' opinions of the Roundabout Railway have changed between the dates of its projection and completion. We remember well when it was surveyed what monstrous prices they got for their slips of land, on the plea that the adjacent acres would thenceforth be good for little or nothing ; and now they exact still more monstrous rents for said acres on building leases, on the ground of the railway's proximity and convenience ! Everywhere, the tall rows of houses come down to the railway cutting ; princely villas have their gardens abutting on it—and it would seem that no ground-rent, however exorbitant, will induce the builders to keep their distance. We see little of the merriment of Islington, for we make a mole-like passage through it underground, or in gloomy cuttings, and only emerge into fair daylight on approaching the Caledonian Road, where we gradually pass from deep fosse to lofty viaduct, and thence look down from a giddy height upon the Great Northern line where it tunnels under the new Cattle Market, and starts on its career to York and beyond. At this point, especially if it be market-day, we are invaded by butchers, drovers, carcass-men, and cattle dealers and agents ; and we pass whole droves of oxen and sheep stuck up in sidings, and bound for the market pens. On again, over house-tops and ware-houses, manufacturing yards, waste building-ground, and pasture-meadows, through Camden Town—stopping there for a minute—and then onward still to that interminable network of rails, the iron Champ de Mars, which is the manœuvring ground of the North-western. Here we finish our roundabout, having encompassed the major portion of the modern Babylon.

The Londoner's pet railway would hardly be so popular as it is if it did no more than is detailed

above. But it does far more—does everything, in fact, for the locomotive citizen that a railway can do. It is not only the ever-ready highway to and from all the roundabout stations, but it is the high road to Hampstead Heath, to Kew, to Richmond, to Hampton Court, to Windsor—to Stratford, to Tilbury and Gravesend, to Southend at the mouth of the Thames—to Epping Forest; and to numberless other intervening or outlying places of popular resort, whose names would fill a long column. In consequence, it is notoriously the pleasure line for those classes whose holidays are brief and ephemeral, and who must perforce return to harness on the morrow. It is, of course, during the summer and on sunny days that the holiday traffic is at the greatest. It is then that the stations are crowded with noisy multitudes, and the carriages thronged to running over, while thousands after thousands are whirled off in all directions to the paradise they have severally selected. It happens occasionally that successive parties who have flown off to some favourite place of resort in batches during the day, seduced by the charms of the weather, by an extra good brewst of ale, or by their own fun and frolic, will all elect to return together and by the last train. In this case, it is not fortunate to be one of the number, the packing being something terrific: all classes are unavoidably bundled in together wherever they can be stowed—forty are said to be squeezed into the room for ten; and we have heard the transit described by a sufferer as a species of black-hole experience, endurable only from its brevity and the certainty of speedy release.

After all, the holiday affairs, large as they are, are but an exceptional feature in the Roundabout Railway. Its serious business is mainly commercial, with a mixture of the convenient. It is more a capacious omnibus, open to any number of passengers, than anything else. It travels to and from all the city stations at omnibus fares, and its principal patrons are those who conduct, control, or transact the business of London in some way or other. Every morning, it runs express trains from its several termini; and at the hours when business commences at the Bank, at Mark Lane, at Mincing Lane, at the Exchange, and other marts, it pours in whole battalions of business men to do the world's work. Again, in the afternoon, it runs expresses to carry them home to dinner; and though it works with unerring regularity all day long up to eleven at night, carrying all London wherever it likes to go, it is only for the accommodation of the men of business that it cares to deviate from its jog-trot pace. As a rule, its trains do not travel fast—they cannot do so, owing to the shortness of the several stages, which does not allow of time for getting up steam to full speed. It is mainly owing to this fact that it maintains so excellent a character for safety; we can hardly remember an accident of any consequence having occurred upon it, and none that could be fairly laid to the charge of its own servants.

In the department of luggage, the Roundabout Railway is almost as formidable as in that of passengers. The amount of goods hauled from the Docks to that vast receiving-ground on the North-western is something almost fabulous. Sometimes, in our evening walks, we hear from far the thunder of a goods-train as it comes at express rate along the Hackney cutting. Think of threescore luggage-vans, chained on to a couple of mighty engines, and stretching over a quarter of a mile in length. As it roars, and pants, and bounds along, shaking the solid ground, we can compare it only to a travelling earthquake, and feel relieved when it is fairly out of sight and hearing. In busy times, this luggage-hauling goes on through the night, and we are startled and literally rocked in our beds by the lumbering masses as they shriek, and crash, and clatter past.

Of course the Roundabout Railway is a well paying

concern; it is rumoured, indeed, that the dividends are first-rate; but not being a shareholder, I can say nothing decisive on that head.

THE SWAN.

THE snowy-plumed bird of Apollo, although he lost his sacred character with the fall of paganism, did not with its divinity sink into utter nothingness. He shared with the peacock and the pheasant the place of honour at chivalric banquets, as the silent witness of stern oaths and knightly vows. When the news reached London of Comyn's death by the hand of the Bruce, and the latter's assumption of the royalty of Scotland, it was before the swans that the aged, enfeebled, but still martial Edward swore to avenge his follower, and punish the rebellious Scots. In *The King and John Thomson's Man*, old Dunbar alludes to this curious mode of taking an oath—a custom that survived the denunciations of two councils of the church:

I would give all that ever I have
To that condition, so God me save!
That you had vowed to the swan,
One year to be John Thomson's man.

In England, the swan holds the pride of place as a royal bird, and in old times, the master of the king's swans was as important a personage as the grand falconer, or the master of the buckhounds of modern days. The possession of a brood of swans was a privilege allowed only to the happy possessors of freeholds of the annual value of three marks (L.3, 6s. 8d.), and many were the pains and penalties enforced for the due protection of the rights of the crown. From Lammas-time to Easter, the placing of nets or drags in any common river or stream, the setting of 'snares, limes, nets, or engines' for the capture of swans, and the hunting of water-fowl with dogs near any haunt of the royal bird, was strictly forbidden. The owner of any dog that chanced to kill a swan, either of *malice prepense* or by misadventure, was liable to a fine of forty shillings. Any one catching a swan upon the wing, was required to deliver it up to the master of the swans within four days' time, in which case he was paid eightpence for his trouble; if he failed to obey the law in this particular, he was mulcted of forty shillings. To drive away breeding birds from their nest, was an offence punished by a year's imprisonment, in addition to a fine. No swan-owner was permitted to fill the situation of swan-herd either to himself or any one else; and it was ordained that no swan-herd, fisher or fowler, should vex any other swan-herd, fisher or fowler, by way of action, except before his majesty's justices of the session of swans, to whom all disputes, in which those birds were in any way concerned, were referred for adjudication.

Swan eggs were valued at the rate of thirteen and fourpence each, and any thief detected purloining them from the nest, was compelled to make compensation at that rate. If he ventured to steal a living bird, the stolen swan, or another in default, was hung up by the beak in a barn, and the thief obliged to give the swan-owner not only his property, but also as much corn as would cover the swan, the grain being poured on the head of the bird until the beak was hidden by the heap.

Royal swanneries existed at Clarendon, in Wiltshire, and at the Isle of Purbeck. The abbot of Abbotsbury, in Dorsetshire, was privileged to hold 'a game of swans' in the estuary formed by the Isle of Portland and the Chesil Bank, and to seize as his own any unmarked swan found within a certain distance. This swannery, the largest in the kingdom, passed from the church at the dissolution of the monasteries, and is now the property of the Earl of Ilchester. The universities of Cambridge and Oxford

possessed the like privilege; the swannery of the latter was rented in the sixteenth century on the condition, that the holder delivered four fat swans yearly, and left six old ones behind him at the end of his term. Eton College also had a right to keep a game of swans on the Thames, but the city companies of the Vintners and the Dyers have long been, and are yet, the greatest subject swan-owners on the river. They still go up the Thames every year, to mark the young birds, and take the number of the beautiful creatures. The swan-marks—annulets, chevrons, crosses, crescents, and such-like designs—are cut upon the bill with a sharp knife. The royal swan-mark of Queen Victoria consists of five open pointed ovals, two cut lengthways, and three cut transversely. Two nicks is the mark of the Vintner's Company; and although doubts have been raised respecting the circumstance of that ornithological curiosity the Swan with Two Necks originating in a corruption of 'the swan with two nicks,' the fact that the first landlord of the famous inn was a member of the corporation goes far to sustain the truth of the surmise.

Swan-upping, or hopping, has long been shorn of its stately ceremonies. The marking of swans used to commence on the first Monday after St Peter's Day, in the presence of the master of the king's game or his deputy, a fine of forty shillings being imposed on every cygnet or swan marked without his knowledge; and the razing, altering, or counterfeiting of any swan-mark, was punished with a year's imprisonment and a penalty of three marks. The marks were duly registered, and a yearly fee of fourpence per mark exacted for the benefit of the royal swan-master, who was also paid twopence for each cygnet, and a penny for each old bird marked at an upping, besides being supplied with a dinner and supper befitting his position. Any old birds found unmarked were claimed for the crown, and if any were by mistake marked doubly, they were kept in a pit, where 'the king's subjects might have right of them,' so that the rightful owner might recognise and receive his property, which in default was seized for the use of his majesty.

The royal bird was once a standing dish at all great banquets; no less than four hundred graced the tables at the installation dinner of Nevill, Archbishop of York. In the reign of Henry VIII, the market-price of swans was two shillings, being fourpence less than that of a prime fat wether. One might now search the metropolitan poulterers' shops a long time before seeing a swan exposed for sale; but at Norwich, so famous for its geese, swans are still eaten. The swan-owners of the county send a certain number of cygnets—some fifty or so altogether—which are placed in a small pond, and supplied with as much barley as they choose to eat. By the beginning of November, they are fit for the table, when they are sent back to their expectant owners with the following rhymed instructions for cooking them:

TO ROAST A SWAN.

Take three pounds of beef, beat fine in a mortar,
Put it into the swan—that is, when you've caught her;
Some pepper, salt, mace, some nutmeg, an onion
Will heighten the flavour in gourmand's opinion.
Then tie it up tight with a small piece of tape,
That the gravy and other things may not escape.
A meal-paste, rather stiff, should be laid on the breast,
And some whitened brown paper should cover the rest.
Fifteen minutes at least ere the swan you take down,
Pull the paste off the bird, that the breast may get brown.

THE GRAVY.

To a gravy of beef, good and strong, I opine,
You'll be right if you add half a pint of port wine.
Pour this through the swan—yes, quite through the belly,
Then serve the whole up with some hot currant-jelly.

N.B.—The swan must not be skinned.

The bird familiar to British eyes is the Mute Swan, found wild in Russia, Siberia, Poland, Lithuania, and East Prussia, and introduced from Cyprus into this country by Richard Cœur-de-Lion, where it soon became half domesticated. The mute swan builds its nest of reeds, rushes, and coarse herbage near the edge of the water, and usually prefers an island home. The female lays six or seven eggs, which are guarded jealously by her mate, who is able and willing to give battle to any intruders, for each family of swans retains a watery district to itself, and resents to the death any invasion of its territory. Of this pugnacity, 'Old Jack' was a notable example. Hatched in the garden of old Buckingham House in 1770, and petted by Queen Charlotte, he became, after his translation to the park, the king of the waters of St James's, drowning intrusive puppies, and even making insulting and mischievous urchins expiate their misdoings by a good ducking. For nearly seventy years, Old Jack held his own against all comers. In 1840, unfortunately for the aged monarch, a flock of Polish geese made their appearance. Jack, who had a thorough old-fashioned British hatred for foreigners, at once declared war against them. The new-comers, nothing loath, accepted the challenge, and the lately peaceful waters became the scene of perpetual conflicts, till one fatal day the whole of the alien force bore down upon Old Jack, who received a death-wound while contending gallantly against his foes at the unequal odds of twenty to one. His bravery earned him an obituary notice in the morning papers of the next day.

During the first year of their existence, the royal birds are known as cygnets; in the second, they become gray birds; and the third, receive the full title of white swans. In some ordinances respecting swans of the sixteenth century, the male and female are distinguished as sire and dam. Above London Bridge, they are familiarly called Tom and Jenny by the floating population of the river; but we believe the most orthodox names for the two sexes are 'cob' for the male, and 'pen' for the female.

The black swan, well known to every schoolboy as the *rara avis in terris*, was long after Javenal's time supposed to be a non-existent bird. Sir Thomas Browne classes it with flying horses, centaurs, hydras, harpies, and satyrs, as 'monstrosities, rarities, or poetical fancies, whose shadowed moralities requite their substantial falsities.' It is a native of New South Wales. Mr Bass was astonished at Port Dalrymple by the sight of at least 300 black swans swimming about in an extent of water of about a quarter of a mile square. A pair were brought over to England in 1801, and presented to the Earl of St Vincent, who gave them to Queen Charlotte. The female unfortunately died in moulting, and her mate taking wing, was shot by a keeper while crossing the Thames. Succeeding importations proved less unlucky, and the black swan is no very uncommon sight now-a-days. In size and strength, they are inferior to their white brethren, and generally get worsted in any encounter they may have with them. But no rule is without an exception. At Lord Shannon's seat at Castle Martyr, in Ireland, a black swan attacked a white one, killed him, and took possession of his widow.

We are taught that out of nothing all things were created; certainly, the musical reputation of the swan was created out of nothing. The tradition of Apollo's bird singing his own requiem is as old as Homer's epics, and is alluded to by Apollonius Rhodius, Philostratus, Anacreon, Aristophanes, and other ancient poets; but the fading away of the swan's life in music exists only in the imagination of the rhyming race, and has no better foundation than the ancient belief that swans could only hatch their eggs in 'a crack of thunder.' When Prince Henry

is told that his father sang in the frenzy of death, Shakespeare makes him say :

I am the cygnet to this pale faint swan,
Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death,
And from the organ-pipe of frailty sings
His soul and body to a lasting rest.

And Emelia, killed by her subtle husband, declares she will

Play the swan,
And die in music.

Waterton watched the last moments of a favourite bird in the vain hope of catching at least some plaintive death-note. But though naturalists have long shewn the fallacy of the popular belief, poets are as unwilling as players to give up a stock 'property,' however opposed its use may be to truth and nature. Even the master-bard of our own time yields to the temptation, and sings how

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow. At first, to the ear,
The warble was low, and full, and clear;
And floating about the undersky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar and sometimes anear;
But, anon, her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flowed forth in a carol free and bold.

The only member of the swan family that has any claim to musical honours is the Hooper, Elk, or Whistling Swan, which emits a peculiar note resembling the repetition of the word 'hoop' several times in quick succession. The Icelanders think the sound melodious, and compare it to the higher tones of a violin, but their judgment may be warped by the fact of the said notes heralding to Icelandic ears the coming of warm days and short nights; for less favourable critics have likened the cry of the hooper to the grating of a rusty sign swinging in the wind. Whether harmonious or inharmonious, the sounds are produced by means of a curious piece of animal mechanism. 'The cylindrical tracheal tube passes down the neck, and then descends between the forks of the merrythought to the level of the keel of the breast-bone, which is double; and this windpipe, after traversing nearly the whole length of the keel between the two plates, is doubled back as it were upon itself, and passing forwards, upwards, and backwards again, ends in a vertical divaricating bone, whence two long bronchial tubes diverge, each into their respective lobe of the lungs.' A well-grown hooper will measure five feet from his bill, and his wings extended measure from tip to tip about eight feet. He is courageous, but easily reconciled to captivity. In summer, he abides in the northern regions, in Scandinavia, and within the arctic circle; in winter, he visits Holland, France, Italy, and our own island, and sometimes reaches still further south—to Egypt and Barbary.

In external appearance, bearing a close resemblance to the hooper, Bewick's Swan is quite distinct in its specific characters. Besides being smaller, and having a reddish rather than a yellow tinge on the head and nape, the disposition of the trachea is different. Bewick's swan has little of the grace and majesty of the mute swan, is very gentle in its disposition, and spends most of its time out of the water.

Mr Yarrell, the acute naturalist, added the Polish Swan (*Cygnus immutabilis*) to the list of species. Unlike the rest of the family, the Polish swan possesses a white plumage from its cygnetship. It had first come under the notice of Mr Yarrell as an article of commerce among the London dealers; but during the severe winter of 1838, several herds or flocks of Polish swans were seen flying along the north-east

coasts from Scotland towards the mouth of the Thames, and several were shot on the way.

America possesses two species of swans, one resembling in some particulars Bewick's swan, and almost equalling the European hooper in dimensions; the other is larger still than that bird, being nearly seven feet in length. This is the Hunter's or Trumpeter Swan. It breeds as far south as latitude 16 degrees, but principally within the arctic circle, sweeping across the valley of the Mississippi as winter draws near at a rate of a hundred miles an hour. Hearne, who is our authority for this extraordinary speed of flight, says the cygnets are very delicate eating, and the older birds when roasted equal to heifer beef. The trumpeter supplies most of the swan-down which reaches England through the agency of the Hudson's Bay Company. The 'keetchee wapeesheva,' as the Cree Indians call them, are as noisy as their European congeners, although Hearne had so little music in his soul as not to be able to perceive any melody therein, and so little charity in his heart as to be 'sorry that it did not forebode their death.'

WORK.

WORK! What is life but work? and work is life.
With man, an inward prompting that impels
The forces of his being to one end :
And in the concentrated strength of mind
Is all improvement, even as the drops
Of rain that swell the current of the stream,
And aid its strength, until the pond'rous banks,
And large o'erhanging trees, yield to the flood ;
So do obstructive superstitions fall
Before the oneness of the modern mind,
Whose current, swollen by recorded thought,
Doth undermine false-fronted prejudice.
The godlike part of us can hardly cease
From work, for in our senseless hours of sleep,
What laboured dreams will Fancy build
Upon the hard foundation of our couch !
Of work, whose fruit is beauty, and painless joy,
Witness the toiling shrubs whose leaves prepare
The scented blossoms of our meads and hills ;
Or with rare work, distill the subtle juice
That fills the bloomy skins of purple grapes.
What else is life but work ! A life of deeds,
Or greater still, the laboured master-thoughts
That fast impress the age in which they spring
With their eternal seals and lines sublime,
Whether on marble, or on yielding clay,
Or on the hard enduring metal's face,
To speak to ages of a task complete.

CHARLES EDK.

On Saturday, 6th July, will be published in this
Journal,

A TALE,

ENTITLED

MYSELF AND MY RELATIVES.

To be continued every week until completed.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—It is requested that all Contributions to *Chambers's Journal* may be, for the future, directed to the Editor, at 47 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

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